

It's a Wired World

By Nicky Hockly, Spain

Introduction

In this first of a regular column dedicated to technology and the teacher trainer, Nicky Hockly takes a look at the ICT (Information & Communication Technology) skills that any professional teacher trainer should have in his/her skillset, and shows you where and how to get them.

Blogs, synchronous chat, WebQuests, VLEs In the age of increasingly tech-savvy learners, these are just some of the ICT (Information & Communication Technology) tools that today's teachers can use with their learners to enhance learning and to increase motivation. Whilst there are a lot of educators working with technology, it's fair to say that there is also a large section of the teaching (and teacher training) profession which is still stoically ignoring anything more advanced than the cassette player.

As our world becomes increasingly wired, and our learners increasingly familiar with technology, are teachers in danger of being left behind? What technology skills does today's teaching professional need? How can the professional teacher trainer help teachers to integrate technology into their classrooms, and indeed – what technology should be integrated, and how? These are questions that an increasing number of professional teacher training bodies and governmental training organisations, are asking themselves.

Apart from learning to use new tools such as Interactive Whiteboards (for those teachers who are lucky enough to have access to them!), there is perhaps more importantly a basic skillset which all teachers, and therefore teacher trainers, need. These skills still need to be clearly integrated into both pre-service and in-service teacher training syllabi, for our profession to be a little more tech savvy, and a little less tech wary. Luckily, one training provider has started to see the writing on the wall, and in January 2006 is launching a training course in ICT skills for the classroom teacher (see the links below).

What are the basic ICT skills that any teacher trainer needs, not only for their professional self but also to impart to their trainees? The articles and links below explore what's happening in the ICT and teacher training world, and some of the ICT skills that today's teacher trainer might need...

ICT in Teacher Training – what's happening?

• ICT Challenge for Teachers

Elzbieta Gajek
www.icc-europe.com/ICT_in_FLT_Final_report_Jan2003/Poland.pdf

Details of a Polish government initiative towards a detailed ICT syllabus in teacher training programmes. Poland appears to be leading the field in introducing standardised and compulsory ICT training for teachers.

• ICT in the Language Classroom training course

Trinity College London / The Consultants-E
www.theconsultants-e.com/courses/trinityict/

Trinity Examinations Board, the well-known teacher training awards body, is launching a new 50-hour ICT in ELT training course for practising teachers from January 2006, which leads to a Trinity-endorsed certificate in ICT in the Language Classroom. The course runs entirely online over 10 weeks, and is one of the first teacher training courses of its kind, offered by a respected pre- and in-service training provider.

ICT in Teacher Training – how can trainers brush up their skills?

• 20 Technology Skills Every Educator Should Have, Laura Turner

<http://thejournal.com/magazine/vault/article/printversion.cfm?aid=5387>

Laura Turner's article is, perhaps, slightly on the extreme side in terms of what educators 'should' have, but it's a good starting point to measure where you are on the scale, and – more importantly – what you might be missing out on. Take a look at the list of proposed technology skills for teachers in the article. Which do you feel confident with? Which could do with brushing up? Which do you think are of no use to you in your current job? How do you rate as a technology-competent teacher trainer?

• Technology Skills Self-Assessment Profile

Fordham University
www.retc.fordham.edu/tssap2/tssap2.asp

Assess your skills (or those of your trainees) and attitudes to technology here – this is a good starting point for working out what you and your trainees need to know. When you have a good idea of the skillset you need, revisit the Laura Turner article above for useful links to learning resources.

• 7 Things You Should Know About...

Educause
www.educause.edu/content.asp?page_id=7495&bhcp=1

This series provides concise information on emerging learning practices and technologies. Each brief focuses on a single practice or technology and describes what it is, how it works, where it is going, and why it matters to teaching and learning. Use ELI's (= EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative) "7 Things You Should Know About..." briefs for a no-jargon, quick overview, and then ask your trainees what they know about these technologies and how they could be used in the classroom.

• Toolsheets, Edweb

http://edweb.sdsu.edu/emerging/tool_list.php

These pages are designed to provide a brief summary of how a specific tool or technique can be applied to instructional use. Each sheet includes examples, variations and links to additional resources. There are 16 tool sheets in the database. Share some of them with your trainees!

The Author

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